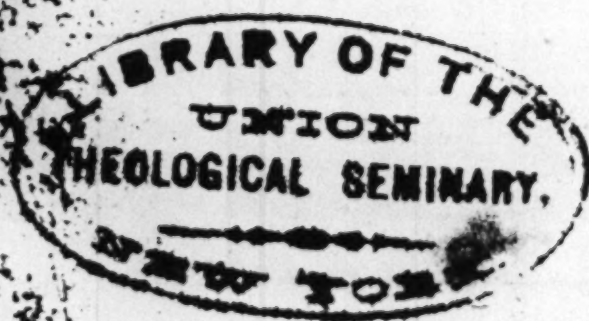


479 A BRIEF
RELATION
OF THE
PERSECUTION and SUFFERINGS
OF THE
Reformed Churches
OF
FRANCE.

Translated out of *FRENCH*, and Published for more general
Information.

*Non minus Principi turpia sunt multa supplicia, quam Medico multa funera.
Remissius imperanti melius paretur
Pestifera vis est, valere ad nocendum. Seneca.*

LONDON, Printed by A. Maxwell, 1668.



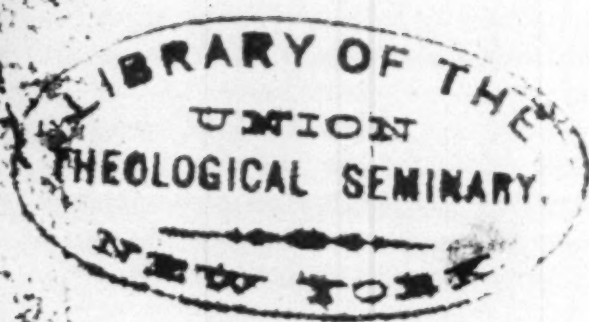
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*A Brief Relation of the
Reformed Church*

IF any man would exactly re-
raised by the Popish Clergy, *Antants*
in *France*, either in general, should
be engaged to write a volume, *ous* :
therefore (to avoid prolixity) let it be only
the Fountains which our Adversaries, and
whence they derive all the Mischiefs. And
they who read this discourse, must look
thereof, not as an enumeration of all, but as
general Heads out of which innumerable have
flow'd into all Provinces, Cities and with
extreamest sorrow and affliction have
where the Reformed Religion was established.

I. The first and most considerable
Prelates to hasten our ruine, is that
under pretext of Executing the *Edicts* the
Decrees made in consequence thereof, *ing a-*
gainst the Breaches of the same, the *ed the*
King to send Commissioners into all *his pre-*
text I confess is speciously *ain, that*
under this fair show they *violent*
Injustice



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*A Brief Relation of the present State of the
Reformed Churches of France*

IF any man would exactly relate all the Persecutions, raised by the Popish Clergy against the Protestants in France, either in general or particularly, he should be engaged to write a volume, then very numerous: therefore (to avoid prolixity) let it suffice to shew only the Fountains which our Adversaries have opened, and whence they derive all the Mischiefs that they do. And they who read this discourse, must look upon the Contents thereof, not as an enumeration of all Particulars, but as general Heads out of which innumerable Deluges have flow'd into all Provinces, Cities and Families, and with extreamest sorrow and affliction have filled all places where the Reformed Religion was established.

I. The first and most considerable Means used by the Prelates to hasten our ruine, is that of *Commissions*: for under pretext of Executing the *Edict of Nantes*, and the Decrees made in consequence thereof, and providing against the Breaches of the same, they have engaged the King to send Commissioners into all Provinces. This pretext I confess is speciously coloured; but it is certain, that under this fair shew they have hid most cruel and violent Injustice

Injustice; for clearing whereof, we must remember, that *Henry* the Fourth of happy memory, having found it convenient (for the quiet of his Subjects) to make this *Edict* as a particular and Irrevocable Law, did send Commissioners into all the Provinces to execute the same; and after those Commissioners had established all things in due form, they returned their executions into the hands of the King to serve as a Rule in all future Debates which could arise on that Subject. I grant, if since this Establishment (which ought to be look'd upon as *Fundamental*) we have Usurped Places for the exercise of our Religion, or by our own Authority have taken any thing not appertaining to us, it's just that they call us to an accompt, and reduce us to our first Condition. But this is not the use that the Clergy make of those new *Commissioners*: for they well know that in stead of Usurping any thing since the first Execution of the *Edict*, we have (on the contrary) sustain'd innumerable losses; and that if the Plea were about *Reparation* of breaches of the *Edict*, they should be obliged to recompence us in a thousand particulars, whereof we have too just cause to complain. They have now altogether perverted the Business; for, concealing the first Execution of the *Edict*, they have compelled all the Reformed Churches within the Kingdom, to appear before those *Commissioners*, and again produce their Titles to verify their Right for the publick exercise of their Religion and to be Judged a second time, as if the *Edict* had never been put in Execution. But who doth not see that this is to violate the publick faith, and underpretence of Executing, to destroy the *Edict* for the *Edict* ought not to be separated from it's first Execution, without which (it being made according to the true intent of the King, and after exact cognizance of all particulars, whereupon Sentences proceeded) the *Edict* it self is of no force. This then

then is most evident Oppression, that after so many years, during which we have been in Lawful possession, they will Judg again that which hath once already been Judged; in every thing quarrelling Matters of Fact, the knowledg whereof, by length of time, and divers Revolutions of the Kingdom, is much obscured. and (which is yet more strange) albeit particular Churches produce Acts made in their favours, by the first *Commissioners* (Executors of the Edict) yet those new *Commissioners*, without any regard thereof, reiect the same as utterly Invalid; certainly if this manner of procedure take place, we can have nothing secure within the Kingdom. For from day to day they may proceed to new *Executions*, and from these to others, until, in end, all our Churches by this Mean shall be destroyed; so much the rather, because there is no likely-hood that they can perpetually preserve their Titles (of the years 1596 & 1597) contain'd in Papers which by the Apostacy, Corruption, or Unfaithfulness of those who had them in keeping (and a hundred other wayes) may be lost; and which the first *Execution* made to be neglected as Titles that were never to be any more questioned,

2. This Oppression is the greater, That those *Commissioners* are commanded to execute the Acts of Council, made in consequence of the *Edict*: for (as we shall afterward shew) these Acts are no other then so many Violations of the *Edict*; which now by this course is nothing else but an empty Name, without effect or reallity.

3. The Maxime lately established viz. That the Clergy of *France* shall be acknowledged as our formal opposite party in matters of Religion; and in that quality be admitted before the *Commissioners*, and in the Council, to pursue all kinds of Actions against us, cannot be otherwise looked upon, then high Injustice. This form of procedure

procedure hath been hitherto unheard of; for never any appeared there in our affairs, except the Kings Attorney-General. And indeed, the *Edict* being intended not as an agreement or decision between the Clergy and us, but as a Declaration of his Majesty's Sovereign and Royal Pleasure, they have no right to interpose in the Execution thereof, nor to make that their proper work; yea, this Interpolation hath not been invented but upon design, upon the meanest occasion to set us in opposition to a most powerful and active Party, before which we can never appear without being incontinently swallow'd up.

4. This oppression is yet the more evident, That the Council *Anno* 1662, past an Act, by which it is ordain'd, That the *Protestants* shall not be admitted before the *Commissioners* to prove the Rights for the exercise of their Religion by Inquests or Witnesses, even although the Witnesses be Roman-Catholicks. Now, beside that this manner of probation was never rejected, what greater severity then to deprive us of the only Mean, which in most of places is left us to justify our Titles? for during the late Wars, many Churches being pillaged or burnt, they cannot otherwise evidence their possession, then by the testimony of ancient men yet alive, who can depose the Condition wherein Affairs stood in the years 1596, & 1597.

5. Whatever Injustice is in the *Commission* it self, there is no less in the *Commissioners*; Each Province hath two, the one a *Papist*, the other a *Protestant*. As for the *Popish Commissioners*, we find by experience that from them we can expect no Justice; For they look upon themselves as called to destroy us, and in effect proceed according to the Instructions of *Menier* the Jesuit, who hath printed a Book, wherein, fast'ning impertinent expositions upon the plainest terms of the *Edict*, and changing his Majesty's Authentick and Royal words, into Jesuitical Equivocations, he
hath

hath perverted all things according to his own inclination; This is a notable Cheat : For when we plead the *Edict*, they tell us (indeed) that it shall be observed; but, that to the King, and not to us, belongs the interpretation; and when we come to an interpretation, in lieu of his Majesty's, they give us that of a cruel, envenom'd, deceitful Jesuit. He it is, who mean while inspireth the Governours of the Provinces (who are the *Popish Commissioners*) with all their prejudice they have at us, and Counsels they take about our affairs : So that our strongest Reasons are scorned, and our best Titles rejected as trifles, whilst their own trifles and false Allegations are admitted as the best of Arguments. And, which is yet more strange, they pass Sentences with so much inequality, and little Justice, that they condemn some Churches, which produce the like and much better Titles then those alledged by some other Churches, whose Priviledges they have ratified. A sufficient demonstration, that they act by Humour, and not by Reason; and that having order to preserve some Churches, and not to destroy all at one Blow, it's left to the Governours Arbitrement, what Churches to spare, which commonly are the most inconvenient, and least considerable, and that they only wait for further Order to sacrifice the rest, and perfect their work already so far advanced. And for the *Protestant Commissioners*, we can expect very little Justice and Protection from them; first, because the greatest part of them are chosen by direction and recommendation of the Bishops, which alone is enough to make them suspected: For, although they profess our Religion, yet that is not alwayes a sure evidence of Faithfulness and Honesty. For this, I shall only instance *Monsieur Sigoniac* of high *Guyenne*, who was chosen by the Bishop of *Montauban*, and by his credit maintained in his Commission, contrary to the dissent of the *Protestants*.

stants made before the King. This man after he had done whatever the Clergy desired, and basely betray'd the Churches, by pitiful parting or sharing* the places of Publick Worship between the *Papists* and *Protestants* (whereunto the Bishop himself gave consent) in end, changing his Religion, became *Romane Catholick*; and by his change declared, That this Commission had been procured in compensation of his former Promise and Obligation to that effect.

* By this *Sharing of Churches* it seems the *Protestants* are forced to use their publick worship by turns with the *Papists* in the same place; whereunto

(for diverse reasons) some more tender and zealous *Protestants* will not resort ; and so are deprived of all publick worship.

6. Again, the *Protestant Commissioners* are prepossessed of opinion, That it is the Kings will, that without respect to the first execution of the *Edict*, they should examine *de novo* the Titles of our Churches, and execute the Acts of Council, without examination whether they be confirmed by, or conform to the *Edict* : So that having once accepted the Commission, they find themselves engag'd by necessity of this supposition to do us abundance of mischief. And it is to be observed, that such hath been the credit and cunning carriage of the Clergy, that by means of this Concurrence of the *Protestant Commissioners*, they have made these things pass as consented to, and approved by us, which otherwise would have been looked upon as only granted by the King unto their own importunity, and so (perhaps) would, have left us some hope, of redress. In fine, suppose those Commissioners to be resolute and favourably inclined, yet the Governours of the Provinces being Masters of the Instructions, by which they proceed and conclude, they can do no good for us, but be swallow'd up themselves, by their *Popish Colleagues*, who have all the Authority and Power in their own hands. And at their utmost, all that they are able to effect, is a
Sharing

Sharing of Churches, which are alwayes finally Determin'd in Council, by advice of the *Popish Commissioners*: For there they observe this general Rule, that in all matters of difference and debate, the advantages, without regard to right of reason, must be given to the *Catholicks*; So that if the business comes once to *Sharing* it is even as good as lost. And to evidence that Injustice is arrived at a great hight, These *Sharings* of Churches agreed upon amongst the Commissioners, are ordinarily concluded in Council, upon the report of the Governours, who having made and being engaged to maintain their own reports, never fail to put a good face upon them, which they may the more easily do, because their *Protestant Colleagues* are never either Called or Heard. The consequences of these Commissions have been generally very fatal to the Reform'd Churches within the kingdom: For it may be truly affirmed, that partly by the Acts made with common consent of the Commissioners for executing the Decrees of Counsel, partly by these other Acts which they have made worse then the Decrees themselves, and partly by these *Sharings* of Churches thus agreed upon among the Commissioners, and approved in Council, according to the mind of the Clergy, *we have lost well nigh three parts of four of all our Churches*. The Province of *Provence* which had Fifteen or Sixteen Churches, is now reduced to Four. The County of *Gex*, which had Twenty three hath now but Two. In all *Bretagne* remains but Two. The losses of high and low *Languedoc* * have reduced them at least to one half of what they formerly possessed. And (to speak nothing of what *Zantogne Angoumois*, and the County of *Aulnix* are upon the point of losing, the Commissioners having agreed to share nigh Sixty Churches) the Province of *Poitou*, which alone had Sixty one indisputable Churches, by an Act of Aug. 6. 1665.

* *Cevenes*
Vivarez,
high
Guynne &
Daulphine

is reduced to Thirteen. Thus these Provinces see themselves, all at once, fallen into extreme Desolation; Their Churches demolished, their Flocks scatter'd, and all that innumerable Multitude of Persons whereof their Congregations were composed, now necessitated either to live without any publick Exercise of Religion; or, through infinite Dangers and Inconveniences, to wander about, and seek it Fifty or Sixty miles distant from their Habitations.

7. Moreover, All men know, that the Clergy finding themselves of late in capacity to obtain whatever they desired of the Council, provided it be against us, have caused such a multitude of Acts to be published, that we have been utterly overwhelmed therewith; a Second immediately following the First, and a Third giving us no leasure to consider the Second; and hard to say, which of them all is the most Afflicting.

One Act ^a hath robbed us the Liberty of Praising God, by forbidding the Singing of *Psalms*, even privately in our Houses; not considering, That it is an Eminent part of Christian Worship, very Edifying, and full of Piety.

Another Act ^b hath deprived us of the Comfort of paying our Last Duty to our Dead, with any conveniency; compelling us to bury *Clandestinely*, and in the Night; forgetting, That the very *Heathens* had respect to the Tombs of their Enemies; and that Hatred should not reach beyond Death.

Another ^c hath divested *Protestant* Magistrates, whatever be their Charge or Quality, of the Priviledg of presiding in their Courts.

Another ^d hath taken away all Means of Instructing and Educating our Children, leaving us at most (and that onely in some places) the smaller Schools, where is onely taught

taught to Read, Write, and Compt : As if our knowledg of God, rendred us unworthy to study Human Sciences.

Another ^e hath restrained the Liberty of Printing any Books in favour of our Religion, by imposing upon us a necessity of obtaining Licenses from the King's Council : Which any may well know they will never grant. Jan. 19. 1663.

Another ^f ordaineth Parents to give Penfions to their Children who change their Religion, even although the said Children will not dwell with them : As if *Paternal* Authority were Nulled by *Childrens Apostacy* : Not remembering, That the *Christian Religion* doth not absolve *Slaves* from their Subjection to their *Heathen Masters*; How much less can the *Romish Religion* discharge Children of their Obedience which they owe to their Parents of another *Religion*? Declar. Octob. 24. 1663, and Act of Council, Jan. 30. 1665.

Another ^g prohibits the Exercise of Charity towards our Brethren, who have not Sufficiency of their own to support them under their Burdens : Which is directly to Forbid what God has Commanded. Octob. 5. 1663.

Another dischargeth Payment of Debts by those of the Commonalty who shall turn *Papists* : The like whereof was never heard; the very Heathen themselves never pretending, That those Christians who Apostatize to them, should be exempted from payment of their Debts.

Another ^h prohibits Ministers to Preach without the place of their Residence : Thereby depriving us of the benefit of *Annexations*; that is, the priviledg of one Minister's supplying Two Churches, which singly are not able to afford a competent Maintenance. Feb. 22. 1664.

Another ⁱ depriveth us of the Liberty of our *Presbyterial* Meetings, in the intervals of Synods : Whereby the exercise of Discipline is restrained, and the Mean of timely repressing or composing these Differences which Sept. 13. 1660. k Colloques.

disturb our Churches, is taken away.

1 Octob. 5 Another^l prohibiteth the Censuring of Protestant Pa-
1663. rents, by the ^m Parochial Eldership, or otherwise, for
m Confi- sending their Children to be Educated by *Jesuits*, or *Po-*
story, i. e. *pish* Tutors: Whereby they compel Elderships and Mi-
 nisters, by their silence, to approve a Scandalous Practice,
 which Conscience and Office obligeth them to con-
 demn.

11 Sept. Anotherⁿ giveth liberty to Priests and Fryars to enter
18, 1664 our Houses, and come unto our Bed-sides when sick, or
and May dying, to sollicite us to change our Religion. This is the
1665. utmost of all Afflictions, That we are not permitted to
 dye in peace; and that we should be exposed to the Cru-
 elty of such Men, who when they cannot triumph over
 Consciences, forget nothing to satisfie their own Revenge:
 And to that effect, after our death, carry away our Chil-
 dren; alledging falsly, That at our death we gave some
 sign or other of Willingness to embrace the *Romish* Reli-
 gion.

1 June 30 Another^o maketh it criminal in Ministers to stile them-
1663. selves *Pastors*, or *Ministers of the Word of God*. Nay,
 though nothing hath been more free in *France*, then the
 form of Garments, they have gone so low, as to regulate
 the Apparel of Ministers, forbidding them to wear a long
 Garment, that they might have no Character to distin-
 guish them from the common people.

But we might reckon to a Century, and engage our
 selves in a prodigious length, should we be exact in this
 sad Subject. One word onely of the Declaration^p of pre-
 tended Relapses. By this it is ordained, That those among
 us who have once embraced the *Papish* Religion, shall never
 again return unto us, under pain of perpetual Banishment
 from the Kingdom. Now this is a sort of Inquisition ne-
 ver heard of in *France*, by which they put mens Consci-
 ences

p Decla-
rat. 1663,
Ratified
in Parl.
Ian. 7.
1663.

ences upon the wrack, constraining the Weak who have been overcome by strong Tentations, to remain in a Communion against the light of their Consciences, and to stifle their remorse, having no liberty to shew any evidence of Repentance. A thing plainly contrary to the *Edict*. Yea, in the Execution of this Declaration, they have proceeded so far, that they have given it a *Retroactive* Power (as they call it) by putting it in Execution against persons who returned to us a long time before the Declaration was in being; whom they have Imprisoned, compelled to do Penance *, and then banished the Kingdom. And, that they may not act this Cruelty without a pretext, they alledg, That these persons by forsaking the *Catholick Religion*, have so violated the respect which they owe it, that they deserve Exemplary Punishment. This is utterly to destroy all *Liberty of Conscience*.

* By going bare-footed and bare-headed thorough the streets with a burning torch, to the place

of Justice, or person offended, and there to ask Forgiveness.

8. To these Afflictions they have added another, not less grievous to us, which is, That they seem to forbid us all hope of being heard in our own Defence: For our Judges themselves are become formally our Party, either because they are afraid to encounter the *Papists*, a Party now so formidable to the World; or because themselves are of that Party; or because they perceive that the only way to advance their own Interest, is to Oppress us; as on the contrary, to do us the least Justice, or shew any commiseration of our Afflictions, is reputed a punishable Crime. I shall not insist upon the furious passion expressed against us by the *Provincial Parliaments*, although arrived at such a height, as nothing can either restrain or mitigate it. Nevertheless, we cannot but heavily groan under their daily Injuries, the Number and Violence whereof is hardly conceivable. All *France* knoweth the Decrees which
the

the Inferior Parliaments of *Tholouze, Rouen, Rennes, Bourdeaux, Pau, Provence, Dijon, and Metz*, have already made, and which (with all greediness embracing every occasion to pour out their Wrath upon us) they are daily making against us. Neither shall I speak of the Malice of Inferior Courts, there being scarce any petty Countrey Justice who doth not expect to raise his Reputation, and make himself Illustrious by persecuting of us. I shall only instance one thing, hardly credible, though very true, viz. That there is no hope of being heard at the Council it self, where all our Affairs have their last Appeal and Audience: For it hath often come to pass, That the *Protestant* Deputies, sent by the Provinces and Cities to plead their Cause, have been expresly commanded by the King to return, without so much as only liberty to appear. Thus in the year 1661, *Monsieur Vignolles*, deputed by the Province of *Low-Languedoc*, to sollicite their Affairs, was no sooner arrived at *Paris*, but he was commanded by an Expres, to withdraw within Eight days, under pain of Disobedience. Likewise *Anno 1664*, the Inhabitants of *Privas* having Commissioned *Monsieur de la Faisse* to Negotiate their Business, he no sooner appeareth, but the Captain of the Watch intimates to him the King's Order to return presently into *Languedoc*, under the same pain. And the last year, (1665,) the Province of *Low-Guyenne*, having deputed *Monsieur de Sarrau* for the same effect, immediately thereafter, he received a Letter under the Seal, prohibiting him to come to Court. By which it is abundantly evident, That they have no mind to hear us, and less to do us Justice. And if other Commissioners have not been treated after this manner, yet they very well know what Repulses they have endured. What difficulties before they had access but to the Doors of the Judges? What pains to find but one Commissioner willing

ling to receive and present their Petitions? And when thorow Importunity they have so far prevailed, they likewise know what kind of Hearing they have obtained; Their best Arguments have been rejected, and most evident Probations contemned, whilst the slightest pretences alledged by their Adversaries, have been admitted with great applause. So that some have spent six months, some whole years to procure a Hearing; whilst the Acts sued against Us by the Clergy, have been obtain'd in less then twenty four hours; and in end after a thousand cares and vexations, they have only had the grief to return to their Provinces, with the news of the loss of the Cause, which they solicited.

9. This is not all. The malice of the Clergy goeth yet much higher; for, it is well known how they endeavour to intimidate and affright our Ministers, thereby to obstruct and disturb them in the care which they should have of their flocks. Thus they have violently Silenced some, others they labour to ensnare upon every hand, some they criminally indite for very trifles, some they banish, and some they transport whither the Prelats please; and all this to make their Life and Condition so miserable, that henceforth no man may be willing to embrace the Profession and Calling of a Minister. The Provinces of *France* are so full of such Examples, that to relate them all would swell to a large Volume.

10. These Cities where Protestants for number are most considerable, seem to be the principal object of our Enemies fury; and especially those which during the late Commotions were zealous in his Majesty's service. Of these, *Montauban*, *Rochel*, and *Milan*, formerly three flourishing Churches, but now reduced to extream desolation, are most doleful Examples. *Montauban* being first deprived of their University and Common Council, hath endured

endured a Garison of five or six thousand Soldiers for four months together ; hath seen her Inhabitants, some hanged, some burnt, some scourg'd, some banished ; the Houses of others pulled down, and Pyramides erected in their place ; others compelled by beating, and all manner of Violence, to go to Mass, and in end forced to accept an Act of Oblivion for an Imaginary Crime. For in all that Tumult alledged against them, there was not one Sword drawn, one Pistol discharg'd, one Hat pierced, nor one drop of blood spilt ; it having only been a Church Assembly according to the ordinary Custom, from which a Messenger was dispatched to the Governour of the Province, intreating the delay of the execution of an Order, to surrender to the Jesuits the publick Schools of a Colledg, which being built at their own expences, did lawfully belong to themselves ; and that only until such time as they should precisely know his further pleasure with protestation, that thereafter they would intirely submit themselves. This is the crime for which they have been used with the same cruelty, as if they had Rebelled against the State, and ever since have been exposed as a prey to the rage of the Priests, who exercise merciless Tyranny upon the poor Inhabitants. *Milan* hath received almost the same measure, for no other cause then burying a dead Corps after the accustom'd manner, contrary to the general Decree, which prohibits the performance of that charitable and sorrowful Office to the Dead in that manner. And as for *Rochel*, all *France* knoweth the Banishment of some of the Inhabitants, and cruel enslaving of the remnant, to such rigour as is worse then Banishment it self. But all this is nothing to what is done at *Privas* : In this Town, although the Reformed Religion had been established by Authority of the late King, and the Inhabitants maintained in that Establishment by several Decrees ; yet
after

after Thirty two, or Thirty three years peaceable possession, they are now banished the Town and Territories thereof, with such Inhumanity, as they have not exercised upon *Barbarians*. This poor people, to the number of Five or six hundred Men, Women and Children, being spoiled of all their Goods, and miserably hunted from place to place, like very Beasts, are now wandering in Woods, without any certain place to this day *, where to settle and rest: And all this without any other pretence than an old Declaration *Anno 1629*, relating to the Commotions of the year 1627.

* i. e. The time of writing of this Relation.

II. Whatever brevity we proposed in this Discourse, yet we cannot but reflect upon another Device, whereof our Adversaries every where make use to render our Condition insupportable, and that is, to Vex and Ruin us with Civil and Criminal Law-Suits, as well against the body of our Church as particular persons; sometimes in the name of the King's General Attorneys, or their Substitutes; sometimes in the name of Diocesan, or Monastick Attorneys, or their Chapters: and all this, oftentimes, for things utterly false, as, That we have spoken Irreverently of the holy Sacraments, or such like enormous Impositions. For proving of all which, they never want Suborners, and false Witnesses. And if at any time the Forgery be discovered, the Judges seldom punish the Authors; or if they inflict any Punishment at all, it is but such as through the slightness thereof giveth greater liberty and encouragement to such persons. What Justice was there done upon a Priest of *Eymet* in *Low-Guyenne*, who accused several Inhabitants of that place, of having profaned the Mysteries of the *Romish* Religion, although the Judges, in end, found and acknowledged the falshood of the Accusation? What Justice was done upon another Priest of *Chastellerant*, who accused an innocent Maid of

expressing some disrespect to the King's Person, although the Judges did likewise acknowledg the imposture of the Priest, and falshood of the Accusation? What reparati-
 on was there ever made to the Name and Memory of a
 poor Man, who was accused before the Parliament of
Rennes, and by Sentence thereof, *Burnt alive*, for alledged
 stealing a Chalice out of the Church, although there-
 after themselves made it evident, by putting three Thieves
 to death, who had committed the theft, that they had
 murthered an innocent person? What pitiful Justice did
 the Parliament of *Thoulouze* lately upon a wicked fellow,
 convict before them of having suborned false Witneses
 to depose against a Merchant of *Montauban*, that he had
 blasphemed the Virgin *Mary*? He was (forsooth) con-
 demned in a hundred *Liures* * fine or damage, and that
 was all the punishment. What satisfaction hath there
 been made to *Monsieur Bobineau*, Minister of *Puzange* in
Poitou, who was falsely accused by a Curate, of Seditious
 Preaching, and upon that pretended crime, was detained
 two months Prisoner in the Common Goal of *Poitiers*,
 although the accusation was found false, and the Accusers
 convict of Forgery? What Cruelty was exercised upon
Monsieur Boxie, Minister of *Turenne*, who being shut up
 in a close Dungeon with Irons upon his feet, was for a
 whole year treated with all manner of Barbarous Inhu-
 manity, and thereafter condemned to perpetual Banish-
 ment, by *Decree* of the Parliament of *Bordeaux* *? In
 which Act it is declar'd that from his words in a Sermon,
 they had some ground to draw consequences, reflecting
 upon the honour of the Blessed Virgin; whereas (in ef-
 fect) he had uttered nothing in the Sermon, but that none
 except Jesus Christ, was born without sin. What punish-
 ment was put upon *Monsieur Faison*, Bailly of *Privas*, who
 before the Justice Court of *Vivarez*, was convict of false
 accusing

* This is
 about 7.
 lib. sterl.

* Sept. 5.
 1664.

accusing some Inhabitants of *Privas*, as if they had deterred and hindred their Brethren from changing their Religion? And what Justice was done upon a Priest of *Nyort*, convict before the King's Council, of falsifying an Act of Parliament, which being made against the Protestants of *Mer*, he would have executed against those of *Nyort*? Although there was never a more bold Cheat, in the very face of King and Council; yet in stead of punishing the Author, the business ended in laughter.

12. When these false Accusations and foul convictions are made appear to the Judges, in lieu of Punishment, they tell us, That they must respect the Honour of the Catholick Religion; not considering that they should much better preserve it by punishing these Impostures which disgrace it, then (as their trade now is) by destroying honest people, by such practices, horrible in themselves, and odious to the World. But it plainly appears, that the design of this Popish Cabal is, by all means and ways to crush and bear us down, until being wearied, disheartned, and impoverish'd by such a long tract of miseries and cross affairs, we become utterly unable to defend our selves, and then in end, being overcome with tentation, seek our peace in the ruin of our Consciences.

13. I shall add a word further of the Liberty granted to Priests and Monks (whose Nature without encouragement is forward enough) to insult over us, to commit all manner of Violence and Injustice, without fear of punishment; yea, and to execute the Acts of Council against us, as now they do in *Poitou*; where the Priests, running from place to place with unparallel'd Barbarity, demolish Churches, dig up and search the very lowest stones of the Foundation, break open Chests, carry away the Poors Moneys, pull down particular Mens Houses, and the Castles of our Gentry, most spitefully abusing their Per-

sons with all manner of injurious words, and violent actions.

14. There is nothing more strange then the ways which those men take to make Profelytes; For, neglecting Instruction and good Example, (which are the only proper and lawful means of gaining Souls to God) they only use Promises, Threatnings, and labour to catch men by snares. Is a Woman at variance with her Husband? thither they run and offer her the Protection of the *Romish* Religion, provided she will embrace it. Is a man decayed, and his Estate disordered? immediately they promise to bear him up against his Creditors, and mountains of Gold, if he will but change his Religion. Is there a debauched Son, and disobedient to his Father? they'r presently with him, perswading him to change his Religion, by a promise of the favour and protection of the Church. Hath any man an unjust Suit at Law like to go against him? Is another justly pursued for his Crimes? their surest refuge is their change of Religion. Is a man poor or sick in a Hospital? let him but change his Religion, and he shall be sure of kindness and good entertainment; but if he remain stedfast, he shall be abandoned, and die in misery. Thus those men shew their zeal to propagate their Religion; or rather, and more truly, thus they scandalize and damnifie it. For while by these ways they labour to promote the same, they but add to their fellowship such vile persons, as having changed upon such base Motives will never do good among them.

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gion;
which,
when he

would not do, t'ey counterfeited the Apparition of Devils, with a Death's head, wherein they had put a light. Those feigned spirits, having severall times spoken to this Young-man, thus, That he was damned if he would not turn Roman-Catholick; in end, they so afrighted him, that he dyed the 24th of *January*, 1666.

15. Nothing can be added to the rigour continually exercised

exercised against us thorow all the Kingdom, whereby they deprive us of all means of acquiring a Livelihood, and all hopes of Preferment, there being no admittance of us unto any publick Office (except those of the Chambers of the *Edict*) no, not so much as to the petty Offices of a Notary, Attorney, or Serjeant; nor yet to learn Arts and Trades. For, although the King by his *Decree*, Jun. 28. 1665. permitteth Protestants as well as Papists, to learn Arts and Trades, by way of Apprentiship; yet by the opposition which is made, when particular persons offer themselves, whereby they are involved in tedious Suits of Law, the expences whereof in end, ruin them, the execution of that *Decree* is obstructed, and the *Decree* it self without effect. So that even the Priviledg which the King was pleased to grant us, is become a snare, and ends in our ruin, by the perverseness of those to whom the Execution of the *Decree* was committed.

16. These things being considered, it may be truly affirmed without unjust aggravation, That the Protestants in *France* are reduced to the greatest extremity of imaginable misery; being without Help, without Comfort, without hope of Justice, overprest with troubles, and destitute of all relief, having scarce the liberty of praying unto, or being instructed in the Knowledg of God; So that indeed there is nothing left but the Life, and that is nothing else but a sorrowful Breath, drawn from a more sorrowful and afflicted Heart, whereof were they likewise deprived, they should be so much the more eased and happy, for, then should they rest in peace, having no sorrows, nor fears. And yet the Clergy not contented to see them in this deplorable Estate, must needs have them utterly destroyed, and therefore will never give over their design until they have accomplished it.

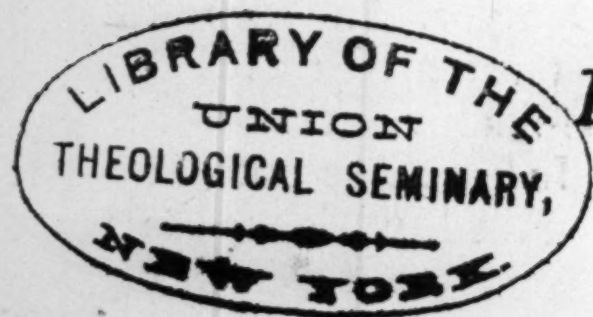
17. And to make this evident, there needs no more, but read an Oration made by the Bishop of *Usez* before the King, in name of the whole Clergy: Wherein, having first rendred thanks to his Majesty for what he hath already done against us, and then petitioned him for a present Declaration, prohibiting Catholicks to embrace the Protestant Religion, and for another *Decree*, Incorporating the mixed Courts (which consisting of half Protestants, and half Papists, had been established in favour of the Protestants) into the Courts of Parliaments; in end, he exhorts, perswades, and adjures him by all the most moving Arguments, that he would now give the last blow toward our utter destruction, seeing he was now able and in capacity to effect it. I hope the King will beware to follow Counsels so terrible and violent; and am sure would have been much more edified had he seen the Bishops more Human, more Christian, and more agreeable to their Profession. But here we yet see their design, and what we may justly expect, from a Party equally powerful and maliciously inflamed against us.

18. That our miseries may be yet more piercing, to injustice they add derision and scoffs, and by those who have done us the greatest injuries, publish abroad, that we are marvelously well used, and have all reason to be satisfied with their Moderation. This is evidence sufficient that they are far from repairing our losses, when having left us but very little, even that Little must pass as an Act of Grace.

In short, Our Fears are doubled. When (upon the one hand) we consider, That all the *Sharings* of Churches, and Determinations of Council against us, have been made and concluded without any regard of the Titles produced by our Churches; then which, none could be better, or more convincing; such as, The Books and Registers of Marriages and Baptisms, the very years of the

Edict, Consistorial Acts, Acts or Instruments of Notaries; the Appearance of these Churches before *Presbyteries*, and *Provincial Synods*, 1596, and 1597 : and I know not how many more Evidences of the like nature. Notwithstanding all which, they proceeded to Sentence against us. And (upon the other hand) when we see the Province of *Bearn* so cruelly used by the Parliament of *Pau*, that after innumerable Severities against both Ministers, and their Flocks, wherein they went so far, as to make Acts against Ministers for not admitting to the Lords Supper flagitious persons, Synodally suspended for their scandalous lives; The said Parliament, in end, hath formally stated themselves their Opposite Party, and (among other things very strange, and never heard of) have petitioned the King for the Extermination of the Reformed Religion out of the whole Province. And when we see that the Clergy of *Bearn* by their Petition agreeing with the Parliaments, have required the very same things which the Clergy of *France* required, in that Oration of the Bishop of *Uzez*, made before the King, and now published in Print: When (I say) we see and consider these things, have we not just cause to fear, That more dreadful Calamities then we have yet seen, are preparing for us. Moreover, is not the present Desolation of the Province of *Poitou*, a most astonishing and terrible Object? In all that vast Diocess of *Lusson*, they have not left so much as one Church. So that the greatest part of our Brethren are forced to travel above Fifty and Sixty Miles to hear the Word; and to expose their new-born Infants (in order to Baptism) to manifold Dangers. And the rest of the Province is but very little better treated, there being but Thirteen Churches allowed for above a Hundred thousand persons of our Religion. In fine, Are not our Fears very reasonable, and well grounded, when we see that

that the Protestants, contrary to the very *Edict of Nantes*, and without regard of their former *Charter*, have been formally subjected to that great *Council General Sessions*, which the King hath erected in the City of *Clermont*; and especially, if ye add, That the Heads of that Superstitious Cabal are now ~~secretly~~ at work, procuring Subscriptions thorow all *France*, unto a League for persecuting of us with all Severity. These things make us justly apprehensive, that, in end, they will break out in acts of open Violence; there being nothing which they are not in case to undertake for accomplishing of our Ruine. And unless we be wilfully blind, we cannot but see, that they design to drive us (by Despair) into some Insurrection: (But that we shall never do; preferring rather to suffer the greatest Extremity, and our very Blood to be shed, then in the least to violate the respect which we owe to our Prince.) And if they cannot overcome our Patience, (as assuredly they never shall) then their Resolution is, By continual Importunity to prevail with His Majesty to drive us out of the Kingdom. But we hope that the King is so Good and Just, that he will never gratifie them in such a thing, without a Parallel. And if we should be called to such a Trial, we hope God will give us such Strength and Courage, as, without regret, to abandon our Native Land, that we may serve him wherever his Providence shall call us. And this, in effect, is the general Resolution of all the PROTESTANTS within the Kingdom.



FINIS.